

## **Self-Assessment Definition of Terms**

Coaching - Joyce and Showers (2002) have proven that transfer of practice rarely occurs without the use of coaching within the classroom environment. Effective coaching offers teachers opportunities to practice new strategies more often and with greater skill. Teachers who have had experience with classroom coaching are able to adapt new strategies more appropriately to their own goals and contexts, retain and increase skills over time, and are more likely to explain the teaching strategies to their students ensuring that students understand what is expected of them. Coaching provides educators opportunities to learn from and with one another within the classroom and can increase the instructional capacity of schools and teachers and, in turn, increase student learning.

Collaboration - time for staff members to learn, discuss, and reflect on literacy achievement and instruction within the regular school day and work toward a common goal.

Community-based – A system-wide commitment requires a shared responsibility through building partnerships. These partnerships are built within the system, across schools, and with parents, communities, and other organizations and agencies to build shared involvement in, and responsibilities for, supporting student learning (Fullan, 2006).

Diagnostic assessment – an assessment used to help teachers plan instruction by providing in-depth information about students' skills and instructional needs. Diagnostic assessments are individually administered to students at risk for failure and provide specific information needed to guide appropriate instruction. It allows teachers to dig deeper to be more informed about grouping needs

Disaggregated - To separate a whole set of data into its parts. As defined by NCLB Law, disaggregated data means that test scores can be sorted by categories such as all economically disadvantaged students, all racial or ethnic minorities, all disabled students, or all limited English students.

Effective delivery - methods used for engaging instructional delivery that will positively impact the students' achievement

Evidence-based best practices - paradigm by which education stakeholders use empirical evidence to make informed decisions about education interventions (policies, practices, and programs).

Explicit and systematic instruction - In *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching*, authors Anita Archer and Charles A. Hughes (2011) define explicit and systematic instruction: "In the quest to maximize students' academic growth, one of the best tools available to educators is explicit instruction, a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new

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skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Rosenshine (1987) described this form of instruction as “a systematic method for teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students” (p. 34).

Fidelity - Fidelity of implementation is the delivery of instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered (Gresham, MacMillan, Boebe-Frankenberger, & Bocian, 2000). Fidelity must also address the integrity with which screening and progress-monitoring procedures are completed and an explicit decision-making model is followed. In an RTI model, fidelity is important at both the school level (e.g., implementation of the process) and the teacher level (e.g., implementation of instruction and progress monitoring).

Formative assessments - guide current and ongoing instruction. The results of formative assessments such as screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic measures are used to adjust instruction to meet individual and group needs on a continuous basis.

Horizontal curriculum alignment - alignment of the curriculum being taught by teachers in a common grade level. It provides teachers with a guide, or goal, for their instruction. It also helps students by ensuring that each student is adequately prepared for the next grade and state assessment.

Instructional leaders – administrators that work side by side staff to engage and support their commitment to improving literacy

Intervention - additional instruction provided to students that is designed to meet their specific needs while at the same time accelerating their growth toward grade-level benchmarks. An intervention could be an educational practice, strategy, curriculum or program used to support students’ needs beyond the basic grade level instruction.

Linguistically sensitive – sensitive to native languages, second language, or hearing impairments

Literacy achievement - student’s ability to read, write, speak and listen in order to communicate effectively with others

Literacy leadership team – administrators and a select group of staff members focused on helping staff improve literacy instruction and achievement. The allocate resources including personnel, time, and professional development and develop a clear plan through the use of the continuous improvement cycle for those resources

Literacy outcomes – the student’s ability to read, write, speak and listen in order to communicate effectively with others

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Literacy setting – e.g., local library supports school literacy events; school encourages participation in library summer reading programs

Literacy strategies – strategies used to get at content understanding and the ability to read, write, speak and listen to communicate that understanding to others.

Local resources - Community-based partnerships and local companies, services and individuals that should be recognized and encourage to be actively involved in all local and school literacy activities. Coordinated efforts should be made to link families with local community resources that provide greater support for students in achieving literacy skills for college and career readiness.

Montana Early Learning Guidelines (MELG) –reflect what children need to know, understand, and are able to do by the time they reach kindergarten. *The Montana Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (Birth-36 months)* reflect what infants and toddlers need to know, experience, and are able to do to reach their individual potential.

Links to additional information:

- MELG [http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/documents/mtelgs\\_001.pdf](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/documents/mtelgs_001.pdf)
- The Montana Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, 2009  
[http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/documents/mtelgs\\_001.pdf](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/documents/mtelgs_001.pdf)

Ongoing, job-embedded professional learning –is provided in many ways to meet varying staff needs. Increasing the effectiveness of professional learning is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators (Learning Forward, 2012). Organizational structures that support ongoing professional learning provide and protect adequate time for teachers to meet and collaborate as part of the regular work-day. Research shows that the benefits of participating in collaborative professional learning include building shared knowledge, intellectual purpose, and collective responsibility for student learning (Calkins et al., 2007). In addition, teachers who collaborate with peers have more opportunities to learn from one another and a greater desire of continuous development of effective practices. Ongoing, job-embedded professional development can be provided in various ways. Some examples include professional learning communities (PLCs), coaching, peer mentoring and technology-based professional learning.

Outcome – an assessment that assists in classifying students in terms of their level of performance. These assessments show which students find success in the current structure of the school and which students do not. It shows how many of the students' performance increases or decreases in a given year and helps identify trends to make structural changes to the district, school, or classroom.

Pacing guide - outlines a consistent instructional timeline

Peer mentoring – Since teachers naturally turn to each other for help, more often than to an administrator, teachers helping teachers has become a formalized and well-received way of

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ensuring direct assistance to every staff member. Successful peer mentoring includes discussions among teachers to focus instruction to the school or district's instructional goals (Little, Galagaran, and O'Neal, 1984). Mentoring is often provided by a more experienced teacher to a beginning teacher. Preparations for teachers would include training on understanding the purpose and procedures of peer mentoring, conducting conferencing and observation protocols, and action protocols. Some districts use collaborative approaches that are not as direct; however, if there is a lack of direction in peer-mentoring programs, well-intentioned teachers will have a vague sense of having done something pleasant but little sense of accomplishment. Peer mentoring most often results in trusting relationships that provides beginning teachers a successful entrance to the profession. Student assessment results are discussed and shared as teachers work together to plan instruction, share ideas, and engage in joint problem solving. Effective peer-mentoring is achieved when an administrator helps select and prepare mentors, assists with matching of mentors, and provides ongoing support.

Professional learning communities – Hoard and Sommers (2008) define professional learning communities (PLCs) as “communities of professionals working to improve student learning together, by engaging in continuous collective learning of their own” (p. ix). Effective PLCs are implemented in various ways; however, “clear shared values and norms, collectively reinforced, increase the likelihood of teachers’ success” (Louis, Kruse, and Marks, 1996, p. 181). Collective learning and ongoing analysis of student data provides teachers the opportunity to openly discuss problems and concerns and share ideas about how to address those problems and concerns.

Progress monitoring assessments - a scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

Protocol - framework for exploring the data through structured conversations.

Reliable – the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation or any measurement procedure produces the same results on repeated trials. The stability or consistency of scores over time or across raters.

Stakeholders – participants and those who will be affected by the partnership. Stakeholders might include: educators, families, community organizations, businesses, early childhood, local education agencies, higher education, and/or unions. The levels of communication may vary among these stakeholders, depending on the circumstances and purpose of the message. The highest level of communication is achieved through collaboration toward solving school/community issues and the sharing of expertise and resources.

Summative assessments - used to measure students overall learning or outcome of the curriculum and standards. Summative assessments are at given at the end of units, mid-term and at the end of a course, which are designed to judge the extent of students’ learning of the material in a course, for the purpose of grading, certification, evaluation of progress or even for researching the effectiveness of a curriculum (Bloom et al., 1971, pg. 117).

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**Targeted professional growth plan structures** – systematic processes such as teacher self-reflections and book studies that allow teachers opportunity to reflect on their teaching and continue to grow professionally

**Teaching academic skills** - It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Rosenshine (1987) described this form of instruction as “a systematic method for teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students” (p. 34).

**Technology** - software or digital devices which students use to learn, access, organize, and communicate information

**Tier 2 instruction** - strategically targeted instruction in addition to core instruction. Strategic Instruction addresses the specific needs of students who do not make sufficient subject progress in Tier 1. Tier 2 interventions are targeted to teach specific skill needs, are evidence based, and align with core classroom instruction. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of students will require Tier 2 instruction. The duration of this instruction varies based on student assessment results and progress monitoring data that measures student response to intervention.

**Tier 3 instruction** - Intensive targeted instruction is provided to the most at-risk students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. This small percentage (1 to 8 percent of students) usually has severe skill difficulties and requires instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs. Intensive instruction should take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction; however, it may, in a few instances, replace core instruction. Students needing targeted Tier 3 interventions will have additional instruction daily (e.g., 90 minutes of Tier 1 instruction plus 60-90 minutes of intervention instruction). Tier 3 interventions may replace Tier 2 instruction and should be provided by the most qualified teacher within a smaller group of students. The duration of this intervention is extended over a longer period of time and varies based on student assessment and progress monitoring data.

**Tier 1 Instruction** - All students should receive core classroom instruction utilizing evidence based curriculum and methods to teach critical elements of subjects such as reading, math, and written expression. Approximately 80 to 90 percent of students will have a sufficient response to instruction by demonstrating subject proficiency with effective Tier 1 instruction. Students who score at the higher level of Tier 1 should be receiving instruction that will continue to keep them challenged.

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Tiered instruction - provides guidance for delivering comprehensive, quality instruction for all students utilizing a process that provides students with high-quality research-based instruction (Tier 1), and interventions (Tiers 2 and 3) that are matched to the student's specific needs. Data are used to drive decisions about individual student progress and to determine the appropriate instructional plan necessary for a student to achieve grade-level success. Intervention instruction focuses on one or more key areas of literacy development, is clearly defined, implemented with fidelity, and is delivered daily to maximize instruction and intervention benefits.

Universal screening (screening assessment) – an assessment involving all children and is usually done at set benchmark points such as the beginning and middle of the school year or the end of a unit of study. Screenings determine level of mastery of age or grade-level standards and is used to group students based on similar needs

Valid - the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure.

Vertical curriculum alignment - planning curriculum across the grade levels, from Kindergarten through high school, building upon instruction based upon standards. It improves student performance by decreasing the amount of instructional time consumed with re-teaching concepts. It is dependent upon vertically aligned state-based standards and evaluated through state testing.

Web-based – An application that is usable only with an active Internet connection and that uses HTTP as its primary communications protocol.